

9 March 1974

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SUBJECT: CIA Chilean Task Force Activities, 15 September-3 November 1970  
(Projects [REDACTED] and [REDACTED])

1. On 16 September 1970 the DCI informed a group of senior Agency officers that President Nixon had decided that an Allende regime in Chile was not acceptable to the United States. The President asked the Agency to prevent Allende from coming to power or to unseat him and authorized up to ten million dollars for this purpose. Further, the Agency was directed to carry out this mission without coordination with the Departments of State or Defense. The DDP was assigned overall responsibility for this project with the assistance of a special WH Division Chilean Task Force.

2. Although Allende had received a plurality of the popular vote in the 4 September Presidential elections, he required confirmation in a Congressional run-off scheduled to be held on 24 October, prior to being invested as President on 3 November. The Task Force attempted a dual approach to blocking Allende consisting of Track One (the "constitutional" route) and Track Two (the military coup route - which was also known as Project [REDACTED]). Track One involved a series of efforts to [REDACTED] President Frei to use legally available means in an admittedly difficult political maneuver to stop Allende. The Department of State and the Ambassador were aware of the general nature and objectives of the Track One program which was conducted with 40 Committee approval.

3. By early October it was clear that President Frei was unlikely to move decisively in this situation and the Task Force therefore placed primary emphasis on the far more sensitive Track Two activities designed to provoke a military coup. For this purpose the U.S. Army Attache in Chile was placed under the operational control of the COS through a special arrangement with the Department of Defense. In addition, [REDACTED] were assigned to the Santiago Station to handle those military contacts with the highest risk potential. Between 5 and 20 October the Station and [REDACTED] made [REDACTED] contacts with [REDACTED] military and Carabinero (national police) officials. Seven of these officials were advised by [REDACTED] of the U.S. Government's decision to [REDACTED]

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SECRET [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

deny Allende the presidency and its willingness to support a coup attempt. The [REDACTED] separately met with [REDACTED] military coup plotters who requested arms, ammunition and funds but contact was suspended [REDACTED] when it was determined that they lacked the organization to conduct a successful coup.

4. Eventually, the best prospects for a successful coup were developed among the high-level military contacts of [REDACTED]. On 18 October the Commander of the Santiago Garrison, General Valenzuela, advised that he and a group of other high military officers were prepared to kidnap Army Commander in Chief General Schneider who was opposed to any intervention by the armed forces to block Allende. The only assistance requested by Valenzuela to set his plan in motion was three submachine guns, ammunition, a few tear gas grenades and gas masks (all of which were provided by the Station through [REDACTED]).

5. On 22 October General Schneider was mortally wounded in an apparently bungled kidnapping attempt. It still is not certain who or what group was ultimately responsible for Schneider's assassination. The Valenzuela group claimed that it was not and subsequently returned all of the CIA provided weapons and materiel to [REDACTED]. In any event the assassination of Schneider provoked a strong reaction in Chile and Allende was elected easily by Congress on 24 October.

(Project [REDACTED] was established on 18 September 1970 with DCI approval for [REDACTED] to cover expenditures on these activities - Project [REDACTED], et al.)